tracery on the green velvet of pines and firs. When the inspector ordered the superintendent to eject us from the tiny cottage and use the latter to store empty barrels, all five of us moved into my own *izba*, a log cabin Nadya had bought for me in the village for 125 rubles (approximately sixty dollars). It was built in Siberian style, of large logs twenty by twenty-four inches thick and had two rooms, with a stove in the smaller one, and a covered porch. A team of prisoners took the *izba* apart in the village, numbered the logs and boards, carried them to the prison grounds, and reassembled them.

The cabin was an excellent place for writing, but one day the chief guard came to tell me that he had received a list of occupations in the working gang, and writing was not among them. He understood, however, that "writer" was just another word for "clerk" and was willing to employ me as a clerk in his office. I did not like that plan for, as an office clerk, I would be caught in the middle of the petty frictions between the common criminals and the administration. I volunteered to work, rather, as a hammerer in the smithshop. The chief guard was surprised by my choice but gave me the job. I was just beginning to learn the trade when he assigned me to another—"a more intelligent" job, as he called it—that of a stock clerk in the prison warehouse. Later I gave lessons to the ten-year-old son of a prison official, and each Saturday the boy brought me an apple or blackberry pie baked by his mother.

In the spring the superintendent asked me to measure the flow of water in the stream running between my cabin and the barracks and to draw up plans for a water wheel and a sawmill. After a careful survey, I reported there was not enough water in the stream but that I thought it worthwhile to explore other streams in the forests around the prison as potential sources of power. The superintendent asked me to do so. This was just the job for me! I could stroll in the trackless forests, exploring hills and ravines, measuring the flow of brooklets and springs. The taiga was full of water, but the streams were too small and too far apart to use for a power station. After two months' research I presented a report recommending abandonment of the project. But meanwhile I had discovered charming clearings and meadows in the thicket. And what an abundance and variety of wild flowers! Siberia has a long frosty winter and a sultry summer, with a short growing period, and flowers do not last long and have no fragrance, but their colors are as bright and rich as in the tropics.

In 1911, two score political prisoners were in the work gang. Some few were permitted to live with their families in the village. Our colony in Alexandrovsk was steadily increasing. In the summer new recruits were added to the political work gang. To get hay for its sixty or more horses, the prison rented many thousands of acres of meadow,